

EXCUSE OF IGNORANCE.

By Ash-Shaikh Al-‘Allāmah ‘**Abdul-‘Azīz At-Tuwailī**’ (Rahimahullāh).

Indeed, from the matters where differences and mistakes have increased is the issue of “**Al-Uzr bil-Jahl**” (excuse of ignorance) in **Asl Ad-Deen** (the foundation of the Deen)

All praise belongs to Allaah, and Salaah and Salaam be upon the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ), to proceed:

Indeed, from the matters where differences and mistakes have increased is the issue of “Al-Uzr bil-Jahl” (i.e. excuse of ignorance) in Asl Ad-Deen (the foundation of the Deen), and many of those who view that the jāhil who commits major shirk is excused, make the basis and reason for that his affiliation to Islaam and his claim that he’s from the Muslimeen. So if he worshiped other than Allaah, and made Duaa to it and sacrificed to it, and was raised upon that since his birth till his death, and he would profess with his tongue “I am a Muslim”, he would consider him from the Muslimeen, and if he worshiped other than Allaah, and made Duaa to it, and sacrificed to it, and would profess with his tongue, “I’m upon the way that Allaah has commanded me to be upon”, he would not excuse him, and this is from the contradictions, without a doubt.

And if he is cited with the comparison between the grave-worshippers and the idol worshippers, and not excusing either one of them with ignorance, he made the affiliation to Islaam the difference (between the two), and due to this affiliation (to Islaam), he rules upon the idol worshiper with Kufr, and rules upon the grave worshiper with Islaam.

And affiliation to Islaam, if it meant solely ascribing to Islaam without the rest of the obligations (like Salaah etc...), then it is a ruling without any

proof for it, and if it means ascribing to the Deen of Allaah, the Exalted and Majestic, whether that affiliation was to the Islaam which Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent with, or too judaism or christianity or other laws which the Messengers were sent with, The one who says this statement must rule the ignorant ones among the jews and christians and other than them with Islaam, because they attribute themselves to the Deen of Allaah which He ordered them to follow, and they fell into nullifiers due to ignorance, and whoever excuse those has disbelieved and left fold of Islaam, and denied the authentic and explicit (texts) from the evidences.

In fact, he must rule upon the Mushrikeen of Quraish with Islaam before the advent of the Messenger of Allaah (Peace be upon him), because they say they are upon the Millah of Ibrāheem (Alaihis-salaam) according to what they claim and assume, and they had some oblations taken from him, and Ahkaam (i.e. rulings) such as Hajj, circumcision, exalting the rites, and they acknowledge that Allaah is the Lord with no partners with Him in creating, sustenance, bringing to life, causing to die, however they commit shirk with others besides Allaah, so it can bring them closer to Allaah, believing that Allaah has permitted him to be a mandate on His behalf, and an intermediary between Him and His creation, Allaah is Exalted from what they claim.

And the grave worshipers are exactly like them in all of this, except that the grave worshipers attribute themselves to the seal of the Prophets instead of the Jaahiliyyīn (ignorants) who attribute themselves to Ibraahīm (Alaihis-salaam). **Moreover, they and them are the same in everything and the grave worshipers will have no benefit in following the Prophet** or adhering to some of his obligations in the Deen, just like the Kuffaar of Quraish had no benefit in following Ibraahīm or adhering to some of his obligations in the Deen.

So affiliation to Islaam is in contrast with affiliation to the way of Ibraahīm, and some of the obligations which they abide by in worship is in contrast with those (the Mushrikeen perform), and the more, or less, (one performs of these) doesn't make a difference in affirming Eemaan and Kufr, and acknowledging the Rubūbiyyah of Allaah is in contrast with those (Mushrikeen) who affirm the Rubūbiyyah, and both parties are disbelievers in Allaah, outside the fold of Islaam, emitted from the Deen.

And if he was affiliated to the correct Deen (i.e. upon pure Tauheed) and committed apostasy when he first grew up, as is the case with many of the qubūriyyah and amongst the Jaahiliyyīn. And after that has surpassed of being upon the fitrah of Islaam (they became apostates afterwards) as is the case with some of the Qubooriyyīn and the early ones who fell into apostasy from the Jaahiliyyīn.

In fact, the grave-worshippers even claim that what they are doing is what Allaah and His Messenger has ordered, in contrast with the statement of the Mushrikeen in Jaahiliyyah, as Allaah, the Exalted and Majestic spoke about them, “And when they commit an immorality, they say, “We found our fathers doing it, and Allaah has ordered us to do it.” [7:28]

And this is the proof of the over-whelming majority of the Mushrikeen amongst the grave worshipers today, rather I met with one of the major leaders from the people of shirk performing ‘Umrah, and he uses the same proof of the first Kuffaar, and he said, **“It's not allowed for you to rebuke what the people (i.e. grave worshippers) are practicing, because they took it from their fathers**, and there's no doubt that they (also) took it from their fathers, and the khalaf took it from the Salaf, so then it (is taken) from the Messenger of Allaah (Peace be upon him) !”

This is exactly what is mentioned in the Aayah from the ‘proofs’ of the Mushrikeen in two things: That they found their fore-fathers practicing it, and that Allaah has ordered them to do it.

Al-Haafiz Ibn Kaseer (Rahimahullaah) said, “And they believe that the practice of their fore-fathers is traced back to a command from Allaah and the Sharee’ah.” And even though this is in the context of “Al-Faahisha”, which was interpreted as being their Tawaaf around the Ka’bah naked, except that it’s indicative to the practice of their fore-fathers as an evidence (for them), and it’s their assumption that the practice of their fore-fathers is stemmed back to a Legislation from Allaah.

And this wrong mistake, just as it occurs with some of the opponents in the issue of “excuse of ignorance” from the students of knowledge, for verily it occurs amongst the laymen alot in excusing the stubborn person (who refuses to accept the Hujjah) that ascribes himself to Islaam, so they don’t make Takfeer upon the one who ascribes himself to Islaam at all, rather I heard from some of those who were called “Duaat As-Sahwa” (i.e. revivalist preachers), who flipped and turned so much say, **“I do not make Takfeer upon whoever says I’m Muslim,” when he was asked about the likes of Haafiz Al-Assad** (i.e. Bashaar’s father, may Allaah curse his soul) **and the Arab Tawaaghīt amongst the apostate rulers.**

And this is the exact blind misconception, and only if I knew, if this was the path of guidance and truth, then why did As-Siddeeq (i.e. Abū Bakr) bother with fighting Musailamah (the liar) and those with him, to the extent that the best Sahaabah went out and died, and killings intensified among the Reciters, Scholars and people of the Qur-aan ?! And the majority of those who the Scholars have ruled upon with Kufr were among the Murtaddīn, even though the over-whelming majority of them attributed themselves to Islaam, and refused to be labelled with other than that.

Rather (to the extent that) this statement has ousted: That the one who says “I’m upon the religion of Moosa” doesn’t disbelieve, or “I’m upon the religion of Eesa” among the jews and christians, and this statement is extravagantly pored in the furthest of misguidance from the Deen of Allaah, and the Book of Allaah, and the Sunnah of His Messenger.

And if it is said, **“This is not acceptable, for they disbelieved after the advent of Muhammad and the abrogation of their ways,”** so this necessitates that if they attributed themselves to Islaam after the advent of Muhammad (ﷺ) and remained upon what they are upon, their ignorant ones would be excused and be a Muslim, and it also necessitates that their ignorant ones were all Muslim believers during the advent of the Prophet, and they only disbelieved due to his advent, **and this is obviously invalid and false.**

What we just mentioned doesn’t mean that we say there’s no difference at all between the one who ascribes himself to Islaam and the one who doesn’t ascribe to it among the Mushrikeen. Rather, the affiliation of a person to Islaam after he has disbelieved has Islaam affirmed upon him in what is the “Zaahir” (i.e. what’s apparent), so if he didn’t adhere to its rulings, or he committed acts of Kufr that nullify the Asl (i.e. Foundation) of Tauheed, then he is judged with apostasy.

But as for the disbelieving groups that are raised upon this view (of shirk), then affirming Islaam for them due to their affiliation to Islaam has two statements among the Scholars. Some of them view that Islaam is affirmed for them due to the affiliation, and apostasy is affirmed (right after) from what they commit from the acts of Kufr, and others view that they are originally disbelievers (i.e. kuffaar Asliyyīn), and that their affiliation to Islaam is just like the affiliation of the Mushrikeen of Quraish to the Millah

of Ibraahīm, and this is what's correct for what has surpassed of not differentiating between both affiliations, and Allaah knows best. (see note)

This, and peace and blessings be upon His slave and Messenger Muhammad, and upon all of his household and companions.

NOTE: It is only relatively recently that the Scholars have formed two opinions with regards to those who ascribe to Islaam and have shirk with them. An Ijmaa' was stated by Ash-Shaikh Abdul-Lateef from the 'Ulaamā of the Da'wah Najdiyyah Salafiyyah Jihaadiyyah that they are ruled upon with Riddah (apostasy).

This is what the Khilaafa (Islaamic Government) holds onto as well. But, that does not suggest that they were ever Muslim for a day, as it is based on the principle that whoever says the Shahaadah enters into Islaam and whoever commits shirk leaves it. Allaah knows best.

SOURCE: <https://ahlutawheed.wordpress.com/2017/06/27/indeed-from-the-matters-where-differences-and-mistakes-have-increased-is-the-issue-of-al-udhr-bil-jahl-excuse-of-ignorance-in-asl-ad-din-the-foundation-of-the-deen/>

There is no excuse of ignorance or Ta'weel for the one who reaches maturity when it comes to issues of Asl Ad-Deen.

Imaam At-Tabarī after mentioning **Asl Ad-Deen** said:

“There is no excuse of ignorance for anyone who reaches the age of Takleef.” [At-Tabseer Mu'allam Ad-Deen]

Shaikh 'Alī Al-Khuzair said,

“In the chapter of Major Shirk, there is no excuse of ignorance and this is a matter of consensus. **The Ijmaa' for no excuse of ignorance is taken from ibnul Qayyim in 'Tareeq Al-Hijratain'** and then it was taken by the Aimmah Ad-Da'wah.”

An example of one going against this Asl is if one was to make a sacrifice for an occupant of a grave or legislate a law or believes there is another creator besides Allaah or loves shirk then this one is a Mushrik and not a Muslim because he nullified Asl Ad-Deen and did not fulfill it and there is no excuse of ignorance for him nor is any Ta'weel from him considered; he is a Mushrik.

Question No. 215338: On the issue of whether ignorance is a valid excuse I have some relatives who are Sufis, and they follow whatever their Shaikh tells them, because they believe he is a man of knowledge. They have practices that come under the heading of major shirk, but they do that on the basis of their own interpretations.

They do not know the Arabic language, but they have a translation of the meanings of the Qur-aan in their mother tongue, although they do not read it. I have read that there is no valid excuse for a Muslim to commit major shirk; that is, if he is able to read the Qur-aan and is able to find a copy of the Qur-aan in the land where he is living, or if he is able to make contact with the scholars and ask them, and refer issues to them.

Is it obligatory for me to regard them (my relatives) as disbelievers? Or do I have to warn against regarding them as disbelievers ?

Praise be to Allaah,

FIRSTLY: What is required of the Muslim is to understand and believe in Tawheed (the Oneness of Allaah) and to follow the Qur-aan and Sunnah according to the understanding of the righteous early generations (salaf), and to avoid innovation (bid'ah) and its people. The Sufi tariqahs (paths) come under the heading of people of innovation, so the Muslim should keep away from their path and not follow in their footsteps. Please see the answer to question no. 118693.

SECONDLY: It is not permissible to take the issue of calling a Muslim a disbeliever (kaafir) or an evildoer (faasiq) lightly, because that comes under the heading of fabricating lies against Allaah and fabricating lies against His Muslim slaves. It is not permissible to call a Muslim a disbeliever or an evildoer unless he commits that which would support that appellation in word or deed, based on clear evidence from the Qur-aan and Sunnah.

Moreover, it is not permissible to call him a disbeliever or evildoer until all conditions required for calling him such are met, and all impediments to that are absent. **One of those conditions is that he should be aware that his words and practice contradict the teachings of Islam,** which led to him becoming a disbeliever or evildoer.

One of the impediments to that is if he bases his action on a misinterpretation, or he may have some specious argument that he thinks provides evidence for his practice, or he is in such a situation that he cannot understand the Shar'ee evidence in a proper manner. A person can only be deemed a disbeliever after there is certainty that he is deliberately going against the teachings of Islam and he is not ignorant of the issue.

For more information on the guidelines on whether or not a person may be deemed a disbeliever, please see the answer to question no. 85102.

THIRDLY: The correct view with regard to the issue of ignorance and whether ignorance is a valid excuse is that if a Muslim is proven to be a Muslim, he cannot be stripped of this description on the basis of mere doubt; rather he cannot be stripped of this description except on the basis of certainty and after establishing proof against him in such a way that leaves him with no excuse.

Shaikh Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab (May Allaah have mercy on him) said:

If we do not describe as a disbeliever one who worships the idol on the grave of ‘Abdul Qadir or worships the idol on the grave of Ahmad Al-Badawi [the “idols” in question are structures over the graves, to which some people devote practices that constitute worship], and the like, because of their ignorance and because there is no one who ever alerted them to their mistake, **then how could we regard as a disbeliever one who never associated anything with Allaah if he does not migrate to us**, or if he does not regard others as disbelievers and fight them? “Exalted are You, [O Allaah]; this is a great slander” [An-Noor 24:16].

End quote from ad-Durar as-Saniyyah (1/104)

It is well-established that basically these non-Arabs have grown up in countries and societies where ignorance of many of the rulings and teachings of Islam is the norm, especially with regard to issues having to do with the Sunnahs and also the foundations of Tawheed. Rather they believe in general terms, but are ignorant of many of the details.

Ibn Taimiyyah (May Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Regarding someone as a disbeliever is like a warning of hellfire, even if it is because the one who is so described is saying something that implies rejection of what the Messenger taught; that man may be new in Islaam, or may be living in the wilderness, far from centres of teaching.

Such a person should not be deemed a disbeliever for something he rejected of the teachings of Islam until proof has been established in his case. A man may not have heard of some particular text, or he may have heard of it but it was not proven to him to be sound and correct, or he may have already some idea established in his mind that contradicts the text and so he misinterpreted the text.

I always remember the Hadees in As-Saheehain about the man who said: **"...When I die, burn me then crush (my bones), then scatter me in the wind and in the sea, for by Allaah, if Allaah grasps hold of me, He will punish me as He has never punished anyone.** They did that to him, then He said to the land: Return what you have taken, and he was standing there. Then He said to him: What made you do what you did? He said: Fear of You, O Lord. And Allaah forgave him because of that."

This was a man who doubted the might of Allaah, and doubted that He would be able to bring him back to life after his ashes were scattered; in fact he believed that he would not be resurrected, which constitutes disbelief according to the consensus of the Muslims. But he was ignorant and did not know that, yet he was a believer who feared that Allaah would punish him, so Allaah forgave him because of that.

If a person misinterprets a religious text when he is qualified to engage in ijtihaad and is keen to follow the Messenger, it is more appropriate that he should be forgiven than someone like the person who is mentioned in the Hadees. End quote from *Majmoo' al-Fataawa* (3/231).

He also said: Many people may grow up in places and times where there is not much left of knowledge of the revelations of Allah, to the extent that there is no one left who can teach others that with which Allah sent His Messenger of the Book and wisdom, so they do not know much of that with which Allah sent His Messenger, and there is no one there to teach them that. **Such people cannot be deemed disbelievers.**

Therefore the leading scholars were unanimously agreed that whoever grew up in the wilderness, far away from people of knowledge and faith, and is new in Islaam, if he rejects some of these well-known, mutawaatir rulings of Islam, he is not to be deemed a disbeliever until he learns the message with which the Messenger was sent.

End quote from *Majmoo' al-Fataawa* (11/407).

Their merely knowing a translation of the meanings of the Qur-aan is not enough; rather even if they are able to read it in Arabic, that is not enough. **How many of those who speak Arabic and have some knowledge of the language still cannot understand** from reading the texts of the Qur-aan and Sunnah that what they are doing is wrong or invalid, **or whether it is shirk or not.**

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (May Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Al-Ghazaali said in his book At-Tafriqah bayna al-Eemaan wa'z-Zandaqah: **What we must be very careful not to do is to call people disbelievers, and we should avoid that as much as possible,** for the error in not labelling one thousand disbelievers as a disbelievers is less grave than the error of shedding the blood of one Muslim. End quote from **Fath Al-Baari (12/300).**

What the questioner in this case should do is strive to call his relatives and acquaintances by teaching them true Tawheed and Sunnah, and bearing with patience their offence, rejection and harshness. The greatest attitude that he can have towards people is as Allaah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allaah and does righteousness and says, "Indeed, I am of the Muslims’?”

And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend. But none is granted it except those who are patient, and none is granted it except one having a great portion [of good].

And if there comes to you from Satan an evil suggestion, then seek refuge in Allaah. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing”

[Fussilat 41:33-36]. See also the answer to **question no. 111362**

And Allaah knows best. **SOURCE: <https://islamqa.info/en/215338>**